64. The following table gives a classification of the new cases of the year under the various heads of crime in the form prescribed in circular letter No. 9-171-1-F. of the Government of India, dated 10th June 1897 :—

Division.	Cases taken into Court.				Cases compounded.				Cases undetected.				Total Cases.				Grand Total of Cases.
	Injury to forests by fire.	Unauthorised fellings or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	Injury to forests by fire.	Unauthorised fellings or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	Injury to forests by fire.	Unauthorised fellings or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	Injury to forests by fire.	Unauthorised fellings or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	
Sukkur ...	3	6	7	15	...	50	1,151	3	25	26	...	...	28	82	1,158	18	1,286
Naushahro ...	1	3	...	10	...	83	155	...	12	...	...	...	13	86	155	10	264
Hyderabad ...	...	8	1	2	...	50	405	1	...	14	...	...	...	72	406	3	481
Jerruck ...	1	1	...	2	...	24	240	...	...	...	...	...	1	25	240	2	268
Total ...	5	18	8	29	...	207	1,951	4	37	40	...	...	42	265	1,959	33	2,299

(2) Fire Protection.

Forest fires.

65. The results of the year's fire protection as compared with those for the year 1895-96 are shown below :—

Division.	Number of fires.		Area burnt.	
	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.
			Acres.	Acres.
Sukkur ...	88	28	6,653	1,416
Naushahro ...	17	12	329	281
Hyderabad ...	16	16	1,236	1,241
Jerruck ...	24	16	2,666	1,037
Total ...	145	72	10,884	3,975

66. Fire protection was generally successful in all divisions, and the work was a little lightened by the season being not so unfavourable as the last for fire conservancy. The river commenced to rise earlier and kept up to about its normal height between the last week in June and the middle of September, so that the forests were not in such an inflammable condition as they were in 1895-96. The punitive measures enforced in some of the forests in Upper and Central Sind in that year have also had the desired effect in that the number of fires was visibly less, especially in the Sukkur Division.

67. It is also satisfactory to be able to record that fire discipline was successfully maintained. The good will of the villagers in repairing to the scene readily and cheerfully to fight fires was remarkable, and it is due to their efforts as well as to those of the Protective staff that, out of the 72 fire occurrences, 23 were extinguished before they had time to cause hardly any damage. Fires got out of hand only in two instances, when there was a strong breeze blowing continuously for hours. In one case, the worst one of the year, the fire, having been observed on the 10th February 1897 at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, was with considerable difficulty got over by midnight, but unfortunately was relighted by sparks from a smouldering log owing to a gale of wind having sprung up at about noon on the following day—such storms being of frequent occurrence at the time of the year. In the other, both the subordinates and villagers were helpless, as it had taken a strong hold of the impenetrable mass of reeds before they reached the scene, and consequently all attempts to suppress it were set at defiance, owing to the inflammable material which was ablaze as well as the high wind which was raging at the time.

The treatment of detected offences in regard to fire protection is tabulated below in the form required by the Government of India in their Resolution quoted in paragraph 64 of this report :—

Division.	Details of prosecutions for offences by fire.						Remarks.
	Serial number of fire.	Acres burnt.	Character of offence (whether careless or intentional).	Whether acquitted or convicted.	Section of law under which convicted.	Amount of punishment.	
Sukkur ...	1	1	Intentional.	Convicted.	S. 25 of I. F. Act, 1878.	Fine Rs. 25.	
Sukkur ...	2	250	„	...	...	...	Case pending in Court.
Sukkur ...	3	25	„	...	...	...	Do.
Naushahro ...	1	...	„	Acquitted.	...	...	The offender did not actually set fire, but was attempting to do it.
Hyderabad ...	...	...	...	..	...	...	
Jerruck ...	1	21	Intentional.	Convicted.	(*b*) S. 25 of I. F. Act, 1878.	Two persons fined Rs. 5 each.	
Total ...	5	297					

68. The following is a statement of the causes of the different fires, prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the Resolution quoted above :—

Division.	(A.) Fire caused by accident or through carelessness in burning fire lines.		(B.) Fire entering the forests by crossing exterior fire traces.		(C.) Fire beginning inside the Reserve or fire-traced area.												Cases unknown.		Total A, B and C.	
					Owing to carelessness or accident.						By intentional firing.						Total.					
					By workmen employed in the forests, by purchasers of forest produce and by yahcutters		By villagers, travellers, &c., passing through the forests.		By Railway engines.		By lightning or by fire balloons.		In order to obtain new grass.		In order to turn out game or to reduce cover.		Maliciously fired.							
	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	No. of fires.	Area burnt in acres.
Sukkur ...	...	...	5	77	2	51	4	233	...	...	...	...	16	805	...	...	1	250	23	1,339	...	...	28	1,416
Naushahro..	1	4	2	48	...	...	8	46	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8	46	1	183	11	98
Hyderabad..	...	...	...	...	2	850	8	171	2	35	...	...	3	145	...	...	1	40	16	1,241	...	...	16	1,241
Jerruck ...	3	138	2	30	2	123	8	696	...	...	...	...	1	50	...	...	...	...	11	869	...	...	16	1,037
Total ...	4	142	9	155	6	1,024	28	1,146	2	35	...	...	20	1,000	...	...	2	290	58	3,495	1	183	71	3,792

69. The most serious case of fire (paragraph 67) occurred in the Unarpur Range of the Hyderabad Division, burning 750 acres, and was suspected to have been caused by the labourers who had been engaged by the coupe contractor to work for him. The principal constituent of this tract being exploitable bahan, growing amongst a dense mass of reeds, it was thought that, to facilitate exploitation, the fire was intentionally lighted. There was naturally no proof to connect any individual with the crime, and the contractor could not be taken to task as, under his agreement, he was able to prove that his workmen were employed in another part of the forest on the day the fire occurred. There being, however, a very strong suspicion, especially as his workmen would be the only gainers by the burning of the grass in that locality, that the fire was lighted by some one of them, the extraction of small bahan timber was immediately prohibited from the burnt compartments. Once the grass was got rid of, the daily outturn of work would be considerable, and almost double wages could be earned for the rest of the season. The prohibition enforced, therefore, deprived them from realising any advantage they might have sought to obtain.

70. As a rule, the number of fires for obtaining a fresh crop of grass exceeds that originating from any other cause. But from the figures shown in the above statement it will appear that, during the year of this report, that cause has not been the principal source of mischief, no less than 28 fires of the total number having been attributed to the carelessness of villagers and travellers passing through the forests on their way to and from the ferries on the river.

(3) Regulation of Grazing and Protection from Cattle.

(a) Grazing Regulations.

Grazing regulations.

71. There is nothing special to note under grazing arrangements in addition to what has been already recorded in former reports. They are suited to the Province and, having been in force for the last quarter of a century, the people seem to be well satisfied with them. The quality of the grazing in Sind is liable to changes,